

TORREY
Illinois

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STATUES

Statues of Abraham Lincoln

Fred M. Torrey
Illinois

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

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STATUE OF LINCOLN, THE RAIL SPLITTER, TO BE HAILED TODAY

Decatur, Ill., Oct. 23 (AP)—A new statue of Abraham Lincoln will be dedicated tomorrow on the campus of James Millikin university.

The bronze figure depicts Lincoln at 21 during his rail splitting days in Macon county, Ill., just before he settled at New Salem. Decatur is the seat of Macon county.

The work of Fred M. Torrey, Chicago sculptor, it shows Lincoln seated on a tree stump, an ax dropped beside him. The statue was paid for from a \$25,000 appropriation by the Illinois legislature.

It will be unveiled by Mrs. Celia Lincoln Sawyer, who lives near here. She is a fourth cousin of the Civil war president. Dr. George D. Stoddard, president of the University of Illinois, will be the dedication speaker.

The new Lincoln figure stands in front of the university's administration building.



Sculptor Fred M. Torrey is shown (above) in his Chicago studio working on a statue of Abraham Lincoln. The statue of Lincoln as a youth will be placed at Decatur, Ill. (AP Photo).





AT TWENTY-ONE
I CAME TO ILLINOIS







LINCOLN—THE YOUNG MAN

DECATUR, ILLINOIS

SCULPTOR — FRED M. TORREY

LINCOLN SHRINE
BOY SCOUT
PILGRIMAGE
FEBRUARY 12



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1968

THE BRONZE DECATUR LINCOLNS
BY
George L. Cashman —

Custodian, Lincoln's Tomb Springfield

One of the very fine examples of Lincoln sculpture stands on the Millikin University campus, in front of the Administration Building, at Decatur, Illinois. The statue is a gift of the State of Illinois to the citizens of Macon County, site of the first Lincoln home in Illinois.

This strikingly magnificent study of Abraham Lincoln as a young pioneer of Macon County, is the work of one of America's great sculptors, Fred M. Torrey. The statue surmounts a pedestal, four feet high. The bronze figure of Lincoln is eight and one half feet tall. Artists, in all fields of artistic representation, have claimed that Abraham Lincoln was a most difficult subject to portray. This must be particularly true of the field of sculpture, for there are few really great Lincoln statues executed. Fred Torrey's Lincoln in Decatur is not a run-of-the-mine production, but a truly great rendition of the sculptor's art.

The heroic bronze figure of the young Lincoln is seated on a stump, his right foot resting on a log. In his left hand he holds an open book, an axe is resting against the log near the right foot, his shirt is open at the collar, his head held high, gazing into the sky. There is an expression of determination manifest in the face and in the attitude of the entire figure. He has reached the plateau of life where he is no longer responsible to his father, he is free to do whatever he will with his life. As he sits on the stump, the axe set aside, the open book in his hand, his eyes looking off into space, he is perhaps, envisioning his probable future. One has but to view the figure for a minute or two to determine that Fred Torrey has caught, and skillfully rendered the emotional drama of the moment.

The statue was unveiled on October 24, 1948, by Mrs. Celia Lincoln Sawyer, of Decatur, a cousin of Abraham Lincoln, before a large assembly of students and interested spectators. The dedicatory address was delivered by Dr. George Stoddard, then President of the University of Illinois.

The Torrey statue is the second of two bronze Lincoln figures erected in Decatur. The first, by sculptor Lovet-Lorski, stands at the entrance to the Macon County Building. These statues provide a most interesting study in contrast.

It was the writer's happy privilege to have known Fred Torrey, and to have seen and admired much of his splendid and inspiring work. In 1962, Fred presented him with a small replica of the Lincoln and Tad statue which reposes on the State House grounds at Des Moines, Iowa. This was the work of Fred and Mrs. Torrey, a sculptor of note in her own right.

Another magnificent Torrey Lincoln, inspired by Vachel Lindsay's poem, Lincoln Walks At Midnight, should find a place in the reconstructed old Capitol at Springfield, to be admired by thousands.

Lincoln At Twenty-One

Bronze Statue By Fred M. Torrey (1884-1967)

Dedicated On October 24, 1948

Millikin University, Decatur, Illinois

GPS Coordinates: N 39° 50.480' W 88° 58.518'

Story and photos by Carl Volkmann

Abraham Lincoln turned twenty-one on February 12, 1830. During that spring, Thomas Lincoln, Abraham's father, loaded his household goods and his family on wagons, left his Indiana home, and headed for Illinois. John Hanks, cousin of Abraham's mother, had selected a new home site for them on the Sangamon River about ten miles southwest of what is now the city of Decatur. Lincoln and Hanks quickly built a cabin, a barn, and a smoke-house and cleared fifteen acres for farming. During that summer, they split rails for two neighbors. As a change from the monotony of hard work that summer, Lincoln made his first political speech in Illinois. When two legislative candidates spoke at a campaign meeting in Decatur, Lincoln stepped up and supported improvement of the Sangamon River for better navigation. The following spring when his father and his family moved again, Abraham did not go with them. He was now a man, both physiologically and legally, and was ready to leave the family forever. Lincoln did not know how he would support himself, but he knew that he didn't want to follow his father into farming or carpentry.

Because of Lincoln's close association with Decatur and Macon County, Illinois Governor Dwight Green appointed a commission of prominent Decatur people to plan for an appropriate Lincoln statue. Dr. J. Walter Malone, president of Millikin University, suggested that the statue be erected on the Millikin campus. He argued that thousands



of young students in their formative years would see this inspirational Lincoln statue every day. State Architect Charles Herrick Hammond chose Fred M. Torrey of Chicago to submit models. Torrey was born in Fairmont, West Virginia, on July 29, 1884. After graduating from high school, he worked as a window decorator until 1909 when he enrolled in the Art Institute of Chicago. For many years he worked as an associate of Lorado Taft.

Torrey presented two models, one showing Lincoln standing and the other seated. The Decatur Public Library conducted a preference poll of Decatur citizens, and the seated figure was chosen. Torrey depicts Lincoln choosing between his axe and a book. Seated on a tree stump, his right arm rests on his right leg. He looks forward with a serious expression. His collar is open and his sleeves are rolled up.

The statue was dedicated on October 24, 1948, and more than 1,500 guests witnessed the unveiling



ceremony. Dr. George Stoddard, president of the University of Illinois, gave the dedicatory address and stated: "Although self-educated, Lincoln supported education, and it is therefore good to see this statue on a college campus." Celia Lincoln Sawyer, Lincoln's fourth cousin, unveiled the statue. Lt. Governor Hugh Cross represented the State of Illinois and reviewed Lincoln's Decatur associations. Fred Torrey and his wife were introduced during the ceremony.

For further reading:

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Durman, Donald Charles. *He Belongs To The Ages: The Statues Of Abraham Lincoln*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Edwards Brothers, 1951.

Hamlin, Gladys E. *The Sculpture Of Fred And Mabel Torrey*. Alhambra, California: Borden Publishing Company, 1969.

"Lincoln Statue Dedication on Millikin Campus Today," *The Decatur Herald and Review*, October 24, 1948.

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Times-West Virginian
Fairmont, W. Va.
January 4, 1959

Lincoln Among Favorite Topics

By HELEN TALKINGTON FRANKMAN

Fred M. Torrey was born in Fairmont, July 29, 1884, son of James Torrey, a shoemaker who served as a model for his son's first sculpturing. The Torrey home was located on Locust Avenue and Fred attended the local schools. After graduating from high school he went to work as window decorator in Sam Iseman's Store, then in Fairmont, and worked there until 1909 when he enrolled in the Art Institute of Chicago, where he studied for four years.

From there on his is a story of outstanding achievements, a dramatic tale of the struggle to rise that succeeded, a story of the reward of merit. He became a famous sculptor.

For many years he worked as an associate of the famous Lorado Taft from whom he received his most valuable training. Fairmont is proud to claim Fred Torrey, a man who has made monuments, portraits, statues, busts, reliefs, medals and architectural decorations for individual institutions, municipalities, states and museums in many sections of our country.

Comparable to encountering an old friend is the thrill of running across one of the beautiful creations of Fred Torrey or his talented wife, Mabel, which is not difficult to do, especially in Illinois, Kansas, Colorado or Wisconsin.

Illinois, the adopted state of the

Torreys for many years served to inspire the Lincoln statues for which Fred Torrey has received much recognition. Colorado is the home state of Mabel Landrum Torrey who as a student at the Chicago Art Institute became acquainted with the young sculptor Fred Torrey and later became his wife.

Independent Sculptors

In 1919 Mrs. Torrey received a commission for a Wynken, Blynken and Nod fountain for Denver, Colo., and this beautiful work of art has made her name unforgettable. It was at this time that the Torreys embarked on their careers as independent sculptors and have continued through the years working independently in a single studio, accepting one another's advice and criticism. He with his large statues, she with her small child figurines.

Soon after their marriage they joined the Cooperative group of sculptors known as the Midway

Studios Colony, situated across from the University of Chicago. The building occupied by the sculptors faced a large court where their work was displayed. Doors opened into private skylighted studios and living quarters of the artists. It was said to be the largest aggregation of exhibiting sculptors under one roof, and it attracted visiting artists from many places.

In 1948, by previous agreement, the University of Chicago took over the building for its art department and the colony scattered. The Torreys bought a studio and home nearby in Chicago where they lived until last year when they moved to 4030 Thirtieth Street, Des Moines, Iowa, to be near their daughter Betty Jane who is married and living in Ames.

The Torrey work has been exhibited widely across the country. Torrey's "Abraham Lincoln Walks At Midnight" was shown at the New York World Fair and at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. He has been awarded the gold medal of the Society of Painters and Sculptors. Both Mr. and Mrs. Torrey give talks on art, illustrated with slides. Mrs. Torrey is a specialist in child sculpture. Her small statues have gone to every country in Europe and to Africa and Australia.

The works of Fred Torrey are so numerous it would require a full length book to adequately describe each one. Some of his best known include the above-mentioned "Abraham Lincoln Walks At Midnight" which can be seen in Garfield Park, Chicago, two equestrian statues of Lincoln which appear in the tomb at Springfield entitled "Lincoln, the Circuit Rider" and "The Ranger" sometimes referred to as "The Scout."

Torrey has done many studies of Lincoln covering various phases of the great man's life from early manhood. He prefers the more informal ones showing the Civil War President wearing something "other than the usual frock coat

and top hat." One of his very best is the monument cast in bronze which was completed in 1948 and stands at Millikin University, Decatur, Ill. This is entitled "At Twenty-One I Came To Illinois." Here he depicts a young Lincoln seated on a log, wearing woodman's boots and an open-necked shirt. Lt. Gov. Hugh Cross, who

spoke at the unveiling ceremonies on the Millikin University campus, praised the work of the sculptor.

"Mr. Torrey has captured the ideals of the young Lincoln at the time of his attaining his manhood," he said. The small white-haired sculptor and his sculptress wife were introduced during the program.

"There Was Another Man on the Raft," also known as "There Was A Fourth Man," is an example of the Scripture interpreted through great art. It was exhibited in 1944 at an exhibition of Chicago artists. This is an unusual sculpture inspired by the story of Capt. Eddie Rickenbacker. The small raft is seen perilously poised against a great wave and the three seated men are dominated by a truly majestic figure of Christ standing over them. It even shows the sea

gull which was to provide desperately needed food.

Indian Sculpture

The Munn Memorial at Topeka, Kan., is one of Mr. Torrey's most ambitious pieces of work. It shows in dramatic form, the Indians, first white settlers, such scouts as Buffalo Bill, a pioneer family in a prairie schooner, cattlemen, farmers and representative culture and industry of the area. It is dedicated to the native sons and daughters and to the pioneers of Kansas.

When this memorial was presented to the state and city, a speaker at the dedication ceremony said: "We believe it to be a thing of beauty and, as such, it will be a joy forever." The background relief is 80 feet wide and 15 feet high. It stands at the entrance of Gage Park, on the out-

skirts of Topeka, the Kansas capital.

Some of the public building decorations done by Fred Torrey include reliefs on the courthouse at Jackson, Miss.; at Norton Memorial Hall, Chautauqua, N.Y.; the McGregor Library, Highland Park, Mich.; the Harsch Memorial Library, DeKalb, Ill., and a frieze for the largest skyscraper in Chicago consisting of 15 tablets.

The Charles Lawrence Hutchinson Memorial tablet for the University of Chicago, the Rosenberger Medal for the University of Chicago, the Charles Clarence Linthicum Medal for Northwestern University, a series of decorations for the Paradise Theater, Chicago, and the Theta Delta Chi Memorial tablet for the University of Illinois.

Mr. Torrey has done many portraits and busts since that first one of his aged father, the shoemaker, so many years ago. Among his best known are a bust of Dr. Olof Hadeen, Chicago, the bronze bust of Martin Luther in Macon County Memorial Park, Decatur, Ill., and in Topeka, Kan.; Niels Espersen, Houston, Tex.; a bronze bust of George Washington in northern Pennsylvania; George Washington Carver, Lincoln as a youth in Illinois; Dr. Carter, librarian at State Normal College, Greeley, Col., and a full size statue of Stephen A. Douglas located in Winchester, Ill.

Busts of Professors

Standing in the halls of the university are many busts of Chicago professors, all expertly done by the skilled hands of Torrey. His Mortimer Matthews tablet can be seen at the hospital in Richards Landing, Ontario, Canada. Exhibited first in the Chicago World's Fair was "Pegasus," a majestic figure of the winged horse. All the large figures are done first on a smaller scale and the minatures and copies of the favorite subjects of Mr. and Mrs. Torrey decorate the living room and studio of their Des Moines home. On a pedestal between sectional sofas is a bronze version of "Pegasus" measuring more than two feet high. On a shelf against the wall stands an impressive statue of "Abraham Lincoln Walks At Midnight."

Looking out of a picture window in the Torrey home is a statuette called "Robin Song" that has been the most popular of Mabel Landrum Torrey's works. It is the

figure of a child listening with rapt expression and tilted face to the song of a bird. Nearly 10,000 copies have been sold.

Mrs. Torrey is best known, however, for her one large piece of sculpturing, a marble memorial to Eugene Fields' three little travelers, who one night sailed off in a wooden shoe. It stands in Washington Park, Denver, Col., and depicts three quaint Dutch figures in a shoe, rising from a shallow pool. Seven and a half feet high, "Wynken, Blynken and Nod" is by far the largest piece of work created by Mabel Torrey and has been described as "A tender bit of sculpture by Colorado's famed artist with the chisel."

This woman's child figures or clay children as they are often called, have irresistible appeal. One of her most popular pieces is entitled, "The Morning Kiss." The mayor of Baghdad, Iraq, saw a copy of it at a peace conference in San Francisco, Calif., and ordered one of take home with him. A woman doctor in Thailand ordered a pictorial reproduction for use on hospital letterheads, calling it "a symbol of what we hope to achieve."



"Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight," sculptured by Fred M. Torrey stands in Garfield Park, Chicago. Suggested by Vachel Lindsay's poem by the same name, it portrays Lincoln as the mourning figure who will not rest. With bowed head he clutches his long robe to his throat and, in the words of the poet, "The sins of all the war lords burn his heart, he sees the dreadnaughts scouring every main, he carries on his shawl-wrapped shoulders now, the bitterness, the folly and the pain." Torrey has captured it all with remarkable depth of feeling and perception.

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Fairmont, W. Virginia
January 4, 1959

By Mrs. Torrey

Other widely-known works by Mabel Torrey are a large bronze portrait of a boy, "Stanley Matthews," placed as a memorial in the Cincinnati Children's Hospital; a drinking fountain memorial of children playing, in a Chicago elementary school, and "Secret," a bronze statue of Pan which stands in the children's garden in Garfield Park conservatory, Chicago.

"Child With Baby Lamb" or "Our Little Lambs," is an especially appealing study of a small

child and lamp intently regarding one another. In Bay View, Wis., stands a fountain design which is a favorite of many, including the writer. Among her plaques is an exquisite Madonna and Child. A large urn on which she shows Jesus with the little children sits in the Presbyterian Church in Sterling, Col., her own home town.

At one time Mrs. Torrey's best model was her little daughter, but now she uses the children of neighbors and friends and, of course, her two small grandchildren. Asked where she gets her ideas, she says: "They just come." An example of this is illustrated by the inspiration which occurred to her after hearing Winston Churchill speak over the radio at the beginning of World War II. He had said: "We shall fight them on the beaches, in the fields and on the streets." Mrs. Torrey's interpretation was, "We shall hear laughter on the beaches, in the fields and in the streets when peace comes," and she set to work on figurines of children to illustrate each scene. Her sensitive fingers can swiftly fashion a bit of clay into a tiny child.

Fred M. Torrey, a white-haired, scholarly man in appearance, has a youthful enthusiasm which matches that of his charming, hazel-eyed wife. Together they are a blend of that quality which denotes both greatness and simplicity and marks them as masters in their chosen field. Through this talented, hardworking and devoted couple we see the attainment of a cherished dream, achieved by pure genius and inspired by a great love for the things they do,



"At Twenty-One I Came to Illinois," reads the inscription engraved on the granite base of this statue by Fred M. Torrey which stands on the James Milliken University campus at Decatur, Ill. It commemorates the fact that Macon County was Lincoln's first home in Illinois. The inspiration was provided by the account of a conversation between John Hanks and Richard Oglesby, who was looking for a campaign slogan for Lincoln. When asked by Oglesby what Lincoln "was good at," Hanks is said to have replied: "Not much of anything but dreaming but he once helped me a good deal in splitting rails."



In his Chicago studio, the sculptor, Fred Torrey, stands beside his bronze bust of Martin Luther which was unveiled in the Lutheran section of Macon County Memorial Park on Memorial Day,

1951. The bust stands on a pedestal of Cold Spring Carnelian granite and portrays Dr. Luther at the age of 38 when he posted his thesis in Wittenberg.



Mabel Torrey's best-known work is this memorial to Eugene Field which stands in a water-lily pool in Denver's Washington Park. Made of pink Tennessee marble, it represents the little figures of Field's famous Dutch Lullaby, "Wynken, Blynken, and Nod." The Denver house in which

Field lived in the 1880's has been moved into the same park and dedicated as the Eugene Field's Library for children. A bronze copy of Mrs. Torrey's statue can be seen in Wellsboro, Pa.



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